

**CLAIMS:**

1. A centralized digital content distribution system for use in an establishment, comprising:

5 a digital content server for storing digital content acquired from a global computer network;

a plurality of remote clients located in rooms of the establishment and linked to the digital content server; and

a portable remote control for communicating with each of the remote clients and selecting the digital content stored in the digital content server.

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2. The system of claim 1, wherein the selected digital content is downloaded from the digital content server to one of the remote clients and converted by the remote client to a playable format.

15 3. The system of claim 2, wherein the playable format is compatible with a standard component connected to the remote client.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the digital content server converts the selected digital content to a playable format compatible with a standard component coupled to the digital content server.

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5. The system of claim 1, wherein the remote clients are linked to the digital content server via a distribution hub, and the remote clients are linked to the distribution hub by a backbone transmission network.

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6. The system of claim 1, wherein the remote control includes means for establishing a first wireless transmission link with each of the remote clients.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the remote control is enabled to display and select the digital content available on the digital content server upon establishing the first wireless transmission link with one of the remote clients.

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8. The system of claim 7, wherein the remote control includes a display for displaying the digital content available on the digital content server.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein the first wireless transmission link is selected  
5 from a group consisting of a radio link and an infrared link.

10. The system of claim 6, wherein the remote control includes means for establishing a second wireless transmission link with standard components connected to the remote clients.

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11. The system of claim 10, wherein the remote control is adapted to control the standard components upon establishing the second wireless transmission link with the standard components.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the digital content is encrypted and at least one  
15 of the digital content server and the plurality of remote clients includes decryption circuitry for unlocking the digital content.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the remote control contains a key code, and  
20 wherein the decryption circuitry receives the key code from the remote control and unlocks the digital content if the key code is associated with an unlock code in the digital content.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein one or more of the remote clients are  
25 integrated into respective standard components.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein the remote control is adapted to control the digital content server to acquire the digital content from the global computer network.

16. The system of claim 16, wherein the remote control is adapted to sort and  
30 categorize the digital content on the digital content server.

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17. The system of claim 1, wherein the digital content is formatted as a compact disc (CD), digital video disc (DVD), MP3, electronic book, or software.

18. A centralized digital content distribution method for use in an establishment,  
5 comprising:

storing digital content acquired from a global computer network at a digital content server;

positioning a plurality of remote clients in rooms of the establishment and linking the remote clients to the digital content server; and

10 selecting the digital content stored at the digital content server by communicating with one of the remote clients with a remote control.

19. The method of claim 18, further including downloading the selected digital content from the digital content server to one of the remote clients and converting the  
15 downloaded digital content to a playable format.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the playable format is compatible with a standard component connected to the remote client.

20 21. The method of claim 18, further including converting, at the digital content server, the selected digital content to a playable format compatible with a standard component coupled to the digital content server.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of positioning a plurality of remote  
25 clients in rooms of the establishment and linking the remote clients to the digital content server includes linking the remote clients to the digital content server via a distribution hub and linking the remote clients to the distribution hub by a backbone transmission network.

30 23. The method of claim 18, further including establishing a first wireless transmission link between the remote control and one of the remote clients.

24. The method of claim 23, further including enabling the remote control to display and select the digital content available on the digital content server upon establishing the first wireless transmission link between the remote control and one of the remote clients.

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25. The method of claim 24, further including displaying the digital content available on the digital content server on a display of the remote control.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the first wireless transmission link is selected from a group consisting of a radio link and an infrared link.

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27. The method of claim 23, further including establishing a second wireless transmission link between the remote control and a standard component connected to one of the remote clients.

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28. The method of claim 27, further including controlling the standard component with the remote control upon establishing the second wireless transmission link between the remote control and the standard component.

29. The method of claim 18, wherein the digital content is encrypted and at least one of the digital content server and the plurality of remote clients includes decryption circuitry for unlocking the digital content.

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30. The method of claim 29, wherein the remote control contains a key code, and wherein the decryption circuitry receives the key code from the remote control and unlocks the digital content if the key code is associated with an unlock code in the digital content.

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31. The method of claim 18, further including controlling the digital content server with the remote control to acquire the digital content from the global computer network.

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32. The method of claim 31, wherein the step of controlling the digital content server with the remote control includes controlling the digital content server to sort and categorize the digital content on the digital content server.

5 33. A centralized digital content distribution system for use in an establishment, comprising:

a digital content server for storing digital content acquired from a global computer network and converting the digital content to a playable format;

10 a plurality of remote standard components located in rooms of the establishment and linked to the digital content server; and

a portable remote control for communicating with each of the standard components and selecting the digital content to be converted by the digital content server to the playable format.

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34. The system of claim 33, wherein the digital content is encrypted and the digital content server includes decryption circuitry for unlocking the digital content.

20 35. The system of claim 34, wherein the remote control contains a key code, and wherein the decryption circuitry receives the key code from the remote control and unlocks the digital content if the key code is associated with an unlock code in the digital content.

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